

THE ECONOMY OF INBO-CHINA

picturesque. Everyone uses the roads, from to peasants. The roads have quickened their feeling of life and power. It has only the briefest contact with the road to dissolve the tradition of centuries that made for inertia, isolation, and detached contemplation.

If the Annamite is taken more swiftly from his native village, he can also return there more easily. He fears journeys less, departure for him no longer means death. The whole country is united by living cordon. Products hitherto deemed unsalable find purchasers. A new sense of human dignity comes from this conquest of nature which is shared alike by those who build and those who use the roads. Egalitarian sentiments flourish. The Siamese are astonished at Indo-China's vehicular democracy which allows carts and motor-cars to use the same roads.

Bridges

Bridges are an expensive corollary to road and railway construction. Like the roads, they have had an extraordinary influence on the In 1897 the need was felt for a great steel bridge to the Red River so as to connect Hanoi with the adjacent provinces. This bridge, the Pont Doumer, crossed 1,700 metres of a torrential river the construction both costly and hazardous. The natives, egged on by the *bomes*, firmly believed that the Red River dragon would never permit this Occidental impiety, and the washing away of several pillars in the early stages of construction reinforced this belief. The achievement of this bridge greatly enhanced French prestige, tad simultaneously lowered that of the local dragon.

A bridge at Hue, built at the same time* and another at

were
the main constructions of this kind during the early
and road building in the delta regions has
made expensive by the amount of bridging
required. They con-
tinued use of the old ferries and boat transport system
about the same purpose and freed some of the for
works.

Waterways

The Red River presents an hopeless
except for native craft. Increased efforts, however,
towards improving the Metoog* especially the
themselves in Laos* toward the of the
aimed to tip the

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